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IN FOCUS

Shanmukha wishes to greet its Readers, Contributors, Subscribers, Advertisers and Well-wishers, A Very Happy New Year.

This issue of Shanmukha begins with a tribute to the Doyen of Music, Sangita Kalanidhi Shri. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, by two of his admirers. A poetic tribute by an admirer has also been included.

With the passing away of the Sangeeta Bhishma Pitamaha on October 31st 2003, the last of the titans has gone. It also marks the end of a very glorious era. Hailed as the Patriarch of Carnatic Music, he embodied orthodoxy in his own musical identity. Awards and honours embellished his life and recognition from both the audience and appreciative seniors came very early to Shri Semmangudi. A very great teacher, he trained a number of disciples. The wonderful artist that he was, he always felt that a life time was not enough to explore what we had inherited from our ancestors. His veneration for the art was exemplary and everything he presented was well honed to perfection, and rasikas enjoyed his concerts particularly at the aesthetic level. His music will surely keep ringing in the ears of his ardent fans and will forever be vividly etched in their minds. These tributes are followed by an article in which the master recalls, in his own inimitable way, his bygone days, making it truly nostalgic.

This issue also carries an obit on Bangalore Shri. K. Venkatram, an eminent Ghatam Vidwan whose vital contributions to music will forever be remembered and cherished by music lovers.

Part III in the series on Music Appreciation also find place in this issue.

In November 2003, Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha launched on a 2 - Day 'Natyakala Vidwat Sadas' traversing all facets of Choreography - The Art of Composing Dances. This issue carries reports and reflections, on the Symposium and extracts from the Keynote Address delivered by Shri. L.M. Singhvi.

The Sabha, having distinguished itself by instituting the National Eminence Award last year, has conferred this year's award on the Doyen of Hindustani Music Shri. Bhimsen Joshi. The recipients of this year Annual 'Sangeetha Shiromani Awards' were Smt. Nityashree Mahadevan, Ms. Urmila Satyanarayanan and Shri. Jayateerth Mevundi. An eminent critic has given due coverage to these functions.

Courtesy: "SRUTI"



PITHAMAHA ATTAINS IMMORTALITY by 'Garland' Rajagopalan

My native village, the beautiful Mandhai on the banks of Natana Kaveri [Dancing River Kaveri] mourns the loss of its proud son-in-law, hailed faithfully with genuine respect and love, as the **Pithamaha of Classical Carnatic Music**. The last of the idolized immortal titans of Classical Carnatic Music of the 20th century, who invested the art, after the Great Trinity and the post-Trinity stalwarts, with glory, has now left at the age of 95 plus after having adorned the concert stage with lavish merit and authority for an unparalleled span of **seventy six years** since 1926. He strode the scene like a colossus, was the undisputed doyen of musicians for many decades and was the only concert musician of recent decades to be hailed as *Pithamaha* of music. He carried on with all its magnificent awe and matchless aroma the distinguished Tyagaraja *Sishya Parampara* with supreme dignity having had his training under highly honoured stalwarts, Umayalpuram Swaminatha Ayyar and wizard Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar, his cousin Semmangudi Narayanaswami Ayyar and the purist Gottuvadyam Sakharama Rao of Tiruvudaimarudur. His reputation rose high quite soon after he entered the concert scene being the nephew of the mighty violinist, Tirukkodikaval Krishna Ayyar.

His two Gurus and most of his

disciples have become Sangita Kalanidhis - a record which may remain unsurpassed. 'Walter Lipman observed that the test of a leader lies in his leaving behind in other men the conviction and will to carry on'. This is abundantly proved in his case. He has left a galaxy in fact. It is an envious record again. He used to mention that Luck was always with him and this luck was also inherited by his disciples. Just the next year after his guru Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar was honoured with the title of Sangita Kalanidhi, he was honoured likewise in 1947, young though he was; It was a record. *Sruti* magazine brought forth a beautiful compendium on the multi-sided life and worthy attainments of Semmangudi.

'*Tirai kadal odium dravyam tedu*' runs the Tamil adage. This monarch was not willing to cross the ocean for all the importance of the honour. So, honours came from across the ocean to be conferred on him at his Chennai, where he reigned and ruled; That was a landmark attainment and record. There is no title or honour of worth that has not covered itself with glory without crowning his worthy musical head. He held prestigious posts in the musical field with rare acknowledged competence. His presence at gatherings and concerts lent grace and stature to the artists presented, the gathering and the occasion.

1926 was both the year of his **marriage** at my village Mandhai and of his **debut** as a musician at Sri Nageswaran Koil, Kumbakonam, then the flower and citadel of classical music and dance. He had a very absorbing, witty description of that memorable first concert. Being a master of wit, he used to spin out an absorbing anecdote.

'There was little crowd at the temple then and little audience. Heavens sympathized and wept with pouring rains outside. The temple cook took pity at the young chap and brought his mud pot from inside to provide additional accompaniment and attraction [ghatam]...'

He was *non pareil* in his *manodharmic* music and a master in making others laugh with subtle wit and punch. Here is a specimen of his multi-sided experience.

'Having seated me well in the reserved compartment, the hosts, after some time, took leave of me. As the train was to depart, the ticket checker entered, saw me in classic *Pancha Kaccham* and told me that the seat had been reserved for a Doctor and asked me to vacate. I explained that I was properly accommodated by my hosts but he would not accept it. Only when he mentioned that the seat had been reserved for a Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar, I had a hearty laugh and enlightened him. He could not match my sartorial outfit with being a doctor. In all good faith, he apologized and wished me pleasant voyage.'

He enjoyed prestige and stature to the last and his home was virtually a temple

of music for caravans of musicians and music-lovers to frequent.

'The Cultural Revolution and Renaissance initiated by the Music Trinity [1762 - 1847] and fostered by Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar and Patnam Subramanya Ayyar [1844 - 1902] found its ultimate flowering in the first half of the 20th century. We have in Semmangudi Dr. Srinivasa Ayyar the golden link with that Golden Era of Classical Carnatic Music which brought forth an unprecedented galaxy of stalwarts in vocal and instrumental music and of composers', recorded '**A Garland**' with genuine pride in 1990. And that pride had held the field true and firm for thirteen long years and now he has joined the other veterans, the distinguished Maharajapuram, Ariyakudi, Musiri and Chembai, and the succeeding GNB, Madurai Mani and other stalwarts.

At home he was simple and orthodox of the pure Tanjorean grace, glitter and glamour, at concerts he had his own *bani* with [nasal] twang. He belonged to the distinguished tribe of Pallavi Gopala Ayyar, Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Ayyar and G.N.B. in taming the voice to answer his needs. Just a few days back, I got a call to meet him but the great giant is not there and I was not aware of his approaching end. I lost the chance of getting his parting blessings. 'Mama, I was not well and had delayed answering your call. Pray, pardon me.'

Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar is among the all - time immortals in the field of classical arts. □

SEMMANGUDI SRINIVASA IYER - A TRIBUTE by P. P. Ramachandran

The Grand Old Man of Carnatic Music, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer breathed his last on October 31, 2003. He was born on July 25, 1908 and was thus 95 years when he departed. At a function in Chennai at the Music Academy, The Governor of Chennai Shri. P.S. Ramamohan Rao described as the "*Modern Trinity*" the three artists Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer and M.S. Subbulakshmi. Ariyakudi shuffled off his mortal coils in 1967. M.S. Subbulakshmi has stopped public concerts due to ill-health. With the passing away of Semmangudi the "*Modern Trinity*" has fallen silent. Semmangudi strode the Carnatic world like a Colossus. He was a Titan in the truest sense. "*Bhishma Pitamaha*" was how he was respectfully and accurately summed up.

Srinivasan or Cheenu as he was affectionately called was born in Tirukkodikaval in the house of his maternal uncle, Krishna Iyer who was a great violinist. It was Krishna Iyer who is credited with having brought about the acceptance of a Western musical instrument, the Violin, as a concert instrument of Carnatic music. Cheenu was encouraged to sing by his father Radhakrishna Iyer who used to render *Ashtapadis* in the village temple. A cousin Narayanaswami, a violinist, trained him from his eighth

year. When he had to move to Kumbakonam, this stopped. A visiting Vidwan, Gottuvadyam Sakharama Rao agreed to teach Cheenu who was, thus, bundled off to Tiruvidaimaradur to adopt the traditional Gurukula method of learning in the Guru's house. The artist's description of his Guru is worth recalling.

"Sakharama Rao in fresh *Kacham*, his forehead streaked with the sacred mark, looking as venerable as Tukaram Swami himself. You wanted to fall at his feet."

The Guru was lavish in his affection but was a strict disciplinarian. The young student's classmates included Devakkottai Narayana Iyengar and Maruthuvakudi Sundaram Iyer.

As Sakharama Rao's health failed Srinivasan reverted to Narayanaswami at Kumbakonam. Here practice was compulsory for eight hours a day and this resulted in the lad's voice becoming razor - sharp and amazingly strong. During this time as he was acquiring mastery over his voice there was a suggestion from Dakshinamurti Pillai that he should change from 'Vocal' to 'Violin'. This made Cheenu work harder, buttressed by an implacable will to master singing. Semmangudi did have a problem with manipulating breath, for which Rajaji suggested use of snuff which would help to clear the throat.

His debut as a singer was in 1926 at the Kumbakonam Nagesvaraswami Temple, with Azaghanambi Pillai on the Mridangam. The temple priest brought his Ghatam to add to the fun, recalls Cheenu. That was also the year he got married. At the Indian National Congress Convention in the newly inaugurated Madras Music Academy in 1927, he had a maiden chance to sing in a Metropolis. He found that he was encouraged by all the veteran artists of that time, especially Chembai, Ariyakudi and Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu. His apprentice under Maharajapuram Vishwanatha Iyer at the age of 16 endowed him with confidence to sing at concerts.

A crucial turning point in his life was when Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavathar recommended his name for editing the Kritis of Swati Tirunal for publication. Three volumes were released and in 1941, he was appointed Principal of the Swati Tirunal Music College at Trivandrum. This was at the instance of the Maharani Sethu Parvati Bayi and the Dewan, Dr. C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer. Semmangudi held, with distinction, the post of the Principal for 22 years till 1963.

Artists are often called by their specialities. When he was a youth, he was called by a local doctor "Ritigowla". He was later christened "Battividuvarada Semmangudi", "Marubalka Semmangudi".

Among his distinguished disciples are M.S. Subbulakshmi, T.N. Krishnan,

T.M. Thiagarajan, P.S. Narayanaswamy, V. Subramaniam to name a few.

The *Sangitha Kalanidhi* title was conferred on him immediately after it was given to his Guru, Maharajapuram. He also got *Padma Bhushan*, *Padma Vibhushan*, *Isai Peringar*, the *Kalidas Samman* and the *SIES National Eminence Award*.

He was noted for his great sense of humour. A few instances. Just a few days before he died, he told a friend, "Actually, the god of death did come calling for me last week. But with the muddle of old houses given new numbers on the street, he made off with a neighbour". About his first performance he said, "Lord Varuna was very kind, and the audience of 15 or 20 could not get away. I don't remember what I sang. The rain pelted down so heavily that I couldn't hear my own voice". A third instance, where he describes his days as a student traveling with Maharajapuram. "Picture me on a train with a tambura on my lap, my Guru's steel trunk, silver betel-leaf box and water jug roped together and fastened to my waist. I couldn't sleep when he was asleep and he wouldn't let me sleep when he was awake;". A final anecdote. The location is the Shanmukhananda Hall in Mumbai, overflowing as they celebrated the centenary of Kalki. Among the speakers was Semmangudi. Even as his turn came and he stood before the mike someone sent a chit. He read it and asked the audience, "Do

you know what this is?. I am advised to restrict myself to three minutes;". He exploded with feigned anger and said, "I have come all the way from Chennai to speak about my good friend Kalki and no one is going to short-circuit me!". He spoke for full ten minutes crackling with wit and humour. "Kalki taught me History of the Kingdoms of South India but I taught him and Sadasivam how to play Rummy!".

Semmangudi's last bow was to donate his eyes to the Eye Bank of Shankar Nethralaya, Chennai.

A tragic footnote. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer left us on October 31. The news item was flashed on Page 1 of the "Hindu" on November 1. The next day, November 2 that paper printed an obituary article entitled "End of an Era" on Semmangudi by C.V. Narasimhan, who was former Under-Secretary General, United Nations and rightly famous for his introduction to the recital of M.S. Subbulakshmi at the U.N. That tribute was at once touching and well written as only Narasimhan could write. CVN as he liked to be called, waxed eloquent about the singer and I quote. "Semmangudi developed and over the years perfected a style of his own. His voice was capable of *swaras*, *sangatis* or *brigas* in *alapana* and responded to every demand made by his fertile imagination. He was a master of *laya*, and his *swara* *prastharas* were usually rendered in the *sarvalaghu* pattern". Even as

readers were scanning this eulogy on that Sunday morning Shri. C.V. Narasimhan passed away. He was indeed impatient to be with this great musical genius of our times.

It was a serendipitous coincidence that on the morning of Semmangudi's passing away, Chennai Doordarshan broadcast a seven-year old, hour long concert by him, ending with his incomparable rendering of the Shankarabharanam masterpiece of Dikshitar, addressed to Sri Dakshina Murthi.

I conclude with an anecdote with a personal bearing.

I still recall the day. It was February 16, 1999. Semmangudi who had turned 90 was being felicitated in the prestigious Y.B.Chavan Auditorium in South Bombay. Kishori Amonkar was there to adorn him with a Gold Bracelet - a *Veera Sringala*. The Hall was jam packed. After the bracelet was presented to him Semmangudi was requested to sing at least one or two songs by the artist of that evening, Sanjay Subramaniam. Though he initially demurred he did sing and with such tremendous grace and that too at 90 years that the audience was spellbound. After this he was led to a seat in the first row. During a short interval when arrangements were being made on the stage I dived to the front row and prostrated and told, "Sir, I am one of your million unknown admirers and have heard you for over five decades. I want your autograph". He said "O.K. What is your name?"

Where should I autograph?". I pulled out a copy of "Frontline" issue dated November 6, 1998. This carried a wonderful analysis entitled "*Semmangudi looks back - at 90*" and carried several valuable photographs, including two in gorgeous colour. He saw the entire article and pictures and commented that I have brought a very good foto and signed on a colour picture. I thanked him. Then he gave a toothless smile and said, "Ramachandran, there is a charge for the autograph. Rupees Fifty". I gladly gave the amount. He said "Don't think this goes to Semmangudi. I collect for an orphanage in Thanjavur". I said "I shall not demand to know where the amount goes. I am supremely content that I could have your blessings and autograph. I shall cherish both as long as I live." □

SEMMANGUDI SRINIVASIER - AN ENEFFABLE MUSICIAN

Serene but not serious, calm and calculative
Energetic, enthusiastic nay pluralistic
Majestic, masterly and magnetic
Moving was his music and magical was his rendition
Aspired for excellence in ragaalapana
Never grazed on the periphery of karnatic classical music
Gentle but strict in adhering to tradition
Upholding the sanctity and sovereignty of music
Derivatory, never derogatory and desultory
Inestimable was his swaragnana and alapana
Selective and never seeming in appearance
Righteous was his approach to musical rendition
Idealistic was his imaginative swara singing
Nonagenarian, his music was ever reverberating
Ineffable was his mastery of the grammar of music
Undoubtedly a musical luminary had mingled with the nature
Always positive and high in thinking and speaking
Sedative and probing was his style of music
Authentic and authoritative was his presentation
Incomparable was his witty remarks and anecdotes
Ever singing the glory and deeds of celestial gods
Resting now in neverending bliss and nectar of life.

- Dr. K. L. Raman

WHAT LIFE HAS TAUGHT ME
by *Sangita Kalanidhi Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer*

Whether as a creative artiste or as a unique interpreter of the great composers or as a contended patriarch, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer is a great role model. The abundant grace of his music is the outward expression of an inner harmony achieved through Sadhana of a rare kind. Talent for improvisation, devotion, classicism, creativity of a disciplined sort and absence of self-indulgence are the high points of his excellence. It is also true that no musician has worked harder or more steadily in pursuit of success as well as the higher ideals that should inspire and guide any Carnatic musician who wants to leave his foot-prints on the sands of time.

A life of great fruition, a life of unique service in cause of music, a Yogi at heart and with utter simplicity in his daily life has recounted here what life has taught him.

My readers, perhaps, know what life has taught me - Music. I would like to say in this article how and from whom I learnt it. I would also like to say what other things I learnt besides music.

I was born on July 25, 1908 in the house of my maternal uncle, Shri Thirukkodikaval Krishna Iyer, a violin maestro. At the age of five, I was initiated into writing the alphabet on the auspicious day of *Vijaya Dasami*, after being helped to write and read "Om Namō Narayana" on a palm leaf.

We were residing at Semmangudi (situated between Tiruvarur and Kudavasal in Thanjavur District of Tamil Nadu) and there was no school there in those days. So, after my '*Upanayanam*', at the age of eight, I began to learn music under the guidance of my cousin, Violin Vidwan Semmangudi Shri Narayanaswamy Iyer.

Later from 1918 to 1921, I learnt vocal music from Gottuvadyam Vidwan Shri Sakharama Rao of Thiruvaidaimaruthur. He showered love



on me as he would do on his own son. At that time Devakottai Shri Narayana Iyengar was also learning music under Shri Sakharama Rao.

My Guru

My Guru was a man of deep devotion and piety. Whenever he was in financial difficulty, he used to go to the temple of Sri Mahalingaswamy and light lamps praying to the deity. Soon, providentially, someone would come and fix him up for a musical concert.

He was a great devotee of Lord Dattatreya. During the month of *Margazhi* (December - January) he would bathe in Kaveri river early in the morning and return home singing devotional songs (*Abhangs*) along the streets. This scene would remind the onlookers of Sant Tukaram. For his music performances, his brother Shri Hari Rao used to play on the violin. Because he was very particular about *Laya* he did not keep any other accompaniments.

During the '*guru-kula*' days, I used to attend many music concerts at temple festivals. In those days there used to be nagaswaram recitals from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m., with importance given to elaborate *raga alapana*. Later, it was Thiruppambaram Brothers who pioneered the singing of Kirtanas. *I can also say with certainty that it is the nagaswaram which promoted the growth and development of raga music.*

During those days we students used to vie with one another to do service to our Guru, such as washing his clothes

and watering plants at his residence.

I consider those days of my studentship as the golden period of my life. Despite his scholarship and eminence, my Guru was a simple person. Let me give just one instance. Once at the Skanda Shashti festival at Tiruvidaimaruthur, Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Iyer made an elaborate *alapana* of Bhairavi Raga. After listening to it, my guru straightaway prostrated before Shri Vaidyanatha Iyer and praised him saying, "Your Bhairavi has completely overwhelmed me". So simple was he.

First Lesson

That incident taught me that one should unreservedly appreciate scholarship and skill whoever possesses it. When I recollect such instances, I feel thrilled. Once Shri Keervalur Ramachandra Bhagavathar met me. He blessed me and said that I would have a bright future as a musician. I consider that it is because of the blessings of such good souls that I could gain mastery in music and make a name.

Later, when my brother Semmangudi Shri Narayanaswamy Iyer moved to Kumbhakonam to do business in Khadi clothes, I followed him to learn music under him. Subsequently, I learnt music under Shri Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer from 1925 to 1928. His son Santhanam was born during that period. He (Santhanam) virtually grew up on my lap. Shri Viswanatha Iyer was so noble minded that he used to

introduce me to the people who gathered for his concerts and arrange for my performances, too.

My Debut

My debut was in the year 1927, at Nageswaraswami Temple in Kumbhakonam, when I was nineteen. Later, in Chennai under the auspices of Indian National Congress, I performed for one hour in the morning (After my performance, Shri Madurai Mani Iyer sang).

In 1928, Shri Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar kindly arranged for my concert at his native village in Kerala. In the same year, I had the good luck to sing at Thiruvaiyaru. Then I got many opportunities to give music concerts. I learnt many *kirtanas* from Shri Umayalpuram Swaminatha Iyer who was in the direct lineage of Saint Tyagaraja.

Usually for my concerts, Kumbhakonam Rajamanickam Pillai used to give accompaniment on the violin and Umayalpuram Kothandarama Iyer on the mridangam (later on ghatam). I am glad to say that by giving encouragement, they were instrumental in raising me to the status in which I am today. Palakkad Mani Iyer, Dakshina Moorthy Pillai, Azhaganambi Pillai and Pazhani Subramania Pillai have given percussion support for my performances.

Asthana Vidwan

In 1939, my concert was arranged on the occasion of the '*Upanayanam*' ceremony of the Prince of Travancore. I

was made the Asthana Vidwan of Travancore State in 1939. In 1941, I was offered the Principalship of Swathi Thirunal Music College, (now renamed Swathi Thirunal Academy). When I conveyed this information to Poojya Sri Mahaswami of Kanchi (H. H. Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati), he blessed me and advised me saying, "Go render this service". Thereafter, I accepted the offer.

At that time, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer was the Dewan of Travancore. He encouraged me and even permitted me to give outstation performances. The Maharaja of Travancore and his mother arranged for my concerts along with Shri Ariyakkudi Ramanuja Iyengar. We used to sing even without the *tambura*. I learnt a lot from Shri Iyengar.

I was in Thiruvananthapuram for 23 years, serving as Principal of the Music College. During those years in collaboration with Shri. Muthiah Bhagavathar, I published in book form 101 *krithis* of Maharaja Swathi Thirunal. This appeared in "*The Swadesamithran*".

Once I accepted an invitation for giving a concert in Sri Lanka, but my father forbade my going abroad (crossing the sea was in those days a taboo). I had to drop the plan and give up once for all my desire to cross the sea. Though I could not go abroad, some of my friends from North America came here and honoured me with titles at the Narada Gana Sabha, Chennai.

I served All India Radio, Madras, for

three years (1957-1960). I am glad to say that Vidwans of three generations have given me instrumental support in my concerts.

Tribute to Parents

Before I end this article, I would like to say a few words about my parents. My venerable father used to chant *Gayatri Mantra* 1008 times every day. He passed away in 1940.

As I was born after my father had installed, at his expense, a '*Vigraha*' (icon) at the Perumal Temple in our native place, Semmangudi, I was named Srinivasa as a token of gratitude to the Lord.

In memory of my father, I have

arranged daily pujas in the morning in that temple, and as per my mother's desire, I have arranged for the conduct of pujas in the Tamil month on *Marghazi* (December - January) at the temple of Lord Shiva in our place. I feel grateful that the Almighty has been gracious enough to use me as an instrument - *Nimitta Matram* for the successful conduct of the Kumbhabhishekam in the two temples.

As mentioned earlier, there was no school in my village for a long time, and hence I was denied schooling. This made me approach Shri C. Subramaniam about 45 years ago (when he was Education and Finance Minister in the Government of Madras under

A lesson in compassion

I would like to narrate here one unforgettable episode, which has left an indelible impression on my mind.

In the Ananthapadmanabhaswamy Temple at Thiruvananthapuram, *Laksha Deepa Festival* (a festival of lights) used to be celebrated once in six years. Huge thatched sheds used to be put up on the open space inside the temple premises, and elephants were used to lift heavy wooden logs (pillars) and put them in the deep pits dug for the purpose. As they were trained for this purpose, the elephants used to do an excellent job of it.

Once an elephant, Chandrasekharan by name, lifted and brought a huge log, hesitated to plant it in the pit. The mahout's repeated goadings and other efforts were of no avail. Not knowing the reason, and tired of intimidating the animal, the mahout and others peeped into the pit. Lo! to their surprise, they found a cat lying inside. They immediately took the timid cat out of the pit, whereupon the elephant planted the log perfectly into the pit. I can never forget this compassion shown by the elephant towards that little creature.

It is from that pachyderm that I learnt the virtue of compassion and mercy and have tried to practise it in my life.

Rajaji's Chief Ministership) for the opening of a school. He was good enough to readily agree and to grant what I asked for. I need hardly say to the readers of '*Bhavan's Journal*' that Rajaji, reputed as the "Conscience keeper" of Mahatma Gandhi, was not only an ardent patriot and scholar, but a very able administrator. He is the first and possibly the only Chief Minister, I think, who entrusted the portfolios of Education and Finance to one minister to ensure adequate financial allotment for education. The school started with 16 students. It has now grown into a high school. I am very happy about this development.

I must not fail here to say something about Shri Musiri Subramania Iyer, who guided me on many matters. He was so good as to perform concerts on my behalf whenever I was unable to do. Further, he was so noble as to tell me that it was enough if he was paid what

was fixed for me (though it was small for his standing).

By God's grace, I have performed all over the country and received titles and awards from many Maharajas and Governments.

I must, in the end, thank wholeheartedly the Almighty who blessed me with the *Satsanga* of many godly and good people. It is this God-given *Satsanga* which "taught" me to be good and to do good, to be humble and compassionate, to avoid resorting to double-think and double-talk, and to be indifferent to praise and calumny. With all my limitations, it has been my endeavour to live up to these great ideals of our age-old religion and culture. It is my constant prayer to God Almighty to bless me with the moral strength to resist the allurements and temptations that may crop up from time to time. □

Courtesy: *Bhavan's Journal*,
Sept. 15, 1999



Shri. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer with Sri V. V. Subramaniam on the Violin and Sri T. V. Gopalakrishnan on the Mridangam - a memorable concert by the maestro given at the Sri Shanmukhananda Sabha on 9.1.1988.

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MUSIC APPRECIATION - PART 3 **by Smt. Geetha Ravikumar**

Having traced in brief the history of Indian music, we shall now consider the two main divisions or systems in Indian Classical music, namely, Hindustani and Carnatic music systems. There is at present a great deal of confusion, misunderstanding and misconception regarding music, musical excellence and achievements not only among the lay public but also among musicians, music-minded persons, critics and reviewers. Perhaps, a little knowledge and understanding of the fundamentals of appreciation and appeal may lessen the chance of ignorance domineering over appreciation. There is also a growing isolation between Hindustani and Carnatic music which requires to be countered in the interests of widening the sphere of understanding and appreciation.

The word 'Carnatic' or 'Karnatak' is believed to have been coined by Vidyananya in the 15th century. He was one of the Prime Ministers in the Vijayanagar kingdom and in addition to being an excellent administrator, he was also a musicologist. It extended from (present names) Andhra Pradesh to Tamil Nadu and Karnataka states. It denotes South Indian Music, as distinct from North Indian or Hindustani music. Scholars like Prof.P.Sambamoorthy and Shri.R.Rangaramanuja Ayyangar and many other scholars have written

treatises on the assumption that Karnataka music is the authentic music of India, and have quoted and referred to the same Sanskrit texts.

Sanskrit texts like 'Naradiya Siksha', 'Natya Sastra', 'Dattilam', 'Sangita Makaranda', 'Sangita Ratnakara', 'Raga Tarangini', 'Sangita Raja', 'Svaramelakalanidhi', 'Raga Vibodha', 'Sangita Parijatha', and many other treatises are referred to by Hindustani and Karnatak or Carnatic music scholars. The fact that both find the material and the base of their respective streams of music is itself proof that there is a broad similarity between the two. The manner of interpretation and shift of emphasis from structural bondage to free improvisation in Hindustani music is one of the main differences between the two; these brought in their wake a host of ancillary changes in *alapana* and *tala*, which ultimately resulted in two almost separate systems of music.

Karnatak music has also been influenced greatly by the old Dravidian (Tamil) music.

Works like 'Silappadikaram', 'Pattupattu', 'Tolkappiyam' and 'Tirumarikandapuram', have references to and description of the Gramas (the two tone-system), of Ragas, musical forms, instruments and the concerts prevalent there.

In Hindustani Music, the *Dhrupada*,

the off shoot of the *Salagasuda Prabandha*, began fading gradually from the 18th century onwards. The *Khyal*, incorporating almost all essential aesthetic qualities of the *Dhrupada*, also added a few attractive graces of the *Thumri*. Also, the relegation of the rhythmic part in *Khyalgayaki* where almost all the essential aesthetic qualities of *Dhrupada*, exist.

The introduction of *Tabla* is a very important phase in the evolution of *Hindustani* music. It opened up for the first time the immense possibilities of free improvisation to the accompaniment of rhythm.

In *Karnatak* music, on the other hand, a study of the structure of its present forms (*kriti*, *kirtanam*, *varnam*, *padam*, *javali*) makes it fairly clear that this music is maintaining the ancient traditions of the *Prabandhas* more closely and rigidly than *Hindustani* music. Just as in *Prabhandha Gana* strict adherence to the structure of the composition is compulsory, so also in *Karnataka* or *Carnatic* music though to a lesser degree, adherence to the forms of the compositions even in improvisation in the *neraval* or *layakari bolupaj* according to *Hindustani* music, while rendering *kritis* etc. is still required.

The evolution of *Karnataka* music from the time of *Venkatamakhi*, who introduced the seventy-two *melakarta* (parent scales) for the classification of *Ragas*, has followed a different path from that of *North Indian* music. *Ragas* in the south are mostly named in *Sanskrit* whereas in the North the names are

derivatives of the dialects of the regions without much intrinsic significance; many of them have no specific reference like *Raga Puria*, *Marwa*, *Sohani*, or *Paraj*. *Bitawal* from *Velavali*, *Bagesri* from *Vagesvari*, *Malkauns* from *Malava Kaisiki* etc. Other names are indicative of the regions in which the *Ragas* originated, such as *Desi*, *Jaunpuri*, *Malavi*, *Gurjari*, *Gauda Malhar* and *Bengal Bhairav*.

It is a matter of wonder that these two styles of music, even though they have the same *svaras*, appear so different to the ear. There are several *Ragas* in both styles which have identical *svaras* but which sound very different. Some pairs of similar *Ragas*, known to most music lovers all over India are : *Malkauns* - *Hindolam*, *Bhupali* - *Mohanam*, *Purya Dhanashree* - *Pantuvarali*, *Yaman* - *Kalyani*, *Ahir Bhairav* - *Chakravakam*, *Hindol* - *Sunadavinodini*, *Bhimplasi* - *Abheri*, *Nat Bhairav* - *Sarasangi* and *Puryakalyani* - *Purvikalyani*.

Why do the same *svaras* sound different? Where is the essential divergence? A study of the two styles indicates the basic difference is in the articulation of the *Gamakas* (graces). In *Karnatak* music, the oscillations of notes are much faster than *Hindustani* music; the amplitude of oscillations on the other hand, is generally much less; and sometimes, strangely, the range of oscillation of the articulated note does not touch the concerned note itself. For example, in *Karnataka Raga Todi*, the *Sadharana Gandhara* (*Komal*) *Gandhara* oscillates from *Rishabha* to *Madhyama*. When the *Gandhara* is

actually sung, the *Andolita Gamaka* (undulation) of this *svara* begins from *Rishabha*, touches *Madhyama*, and comes back. The *Gamakas* of *South Indian* music, with their short amplitude and fast oscillations, are of a clear reflection of a steady and clean image, just as the image in a mirror. *Gamakas* play an important role on the mood and emotional content of the *svara* both in *Karnataka* and *Hindustani* music. It plays an over all development in the improvisation, styles of music. The terminologies regarding *Hindustani* and *Carnatic* music with reference to *Gamakas* will be explained in my later article.

Appreciation in its abstract form

Appreciation and appeal in their abstract forms are qualities inherent in all living beings under the comprehensive words of aesthetics and emotions. Perhaps, they are God-given and natural attributes of life. They exist even in animals. The theoretical basis of aesthetics and appreciation of tones and patterns, the stimulus and response caused by telecentric and autocentric notes like *Vadi-Samvadi* etc (like *King* and *Minister*) etc. have been a matter of importance and this will be discussed in detail in the later series. The subjective appreciation and appeal of art and artistic production in a relative sense, vis-à-vis the creature of art and their users and appreciators are so universal and complicated that a simple treatment is difficult.

The equation in the chemical formula

of hydrogen and oxygen is equal to H_2O or water because hydrogen and oxygen always produce water. In the case of Arts and Music, there are two groups of intermediate quantities and several other variables which vary from individual to individual among the performers and listeners. Although, theoretically, even a scientific evaluation of each type and an universally applicable formula might be possible in the fullness of time, it is not at present available and so, I shall deal with the practical side of subjective appreciation and leave out of account the spiritual aspect and a God-given talent, although this spiritual aspect is important. Nevertheless, the norms and standards of appreciation and appeal may be grouped into three broad categories. (1) Superficial and physical (2) Deeper subconscious and intellectual (3) Deepest or emotional and lasting, which may reach the transcendental in its extreme reaches.

Each of the first two may be experienced through necessary training, practice, devotion and familiarity in a progressive degree. The last may be also reached by special gift and efforts, but it is generally confined to a few great souls (Eg. *Saint Thyagaraja*, *Muthuswamy Dikshitar*, *Shyama Sastrigal*).

There is some deeper layer of human nature which we have not yet reached by the ordinary method of science; we only call "Spiritual". The *raison d'être* of appreciation or the most essential requisite in an average person is 'sympathy'. This sympathy may take

several forms. It may be sympathy or affinity due to nationality, caste, religion, race or even political or ideological affiliations of the performer. It may also be sympathy due to the faith, devotion, familiarity and meaning of the words or Sahitya and style of the music heard. If sympathy in any form is absent, at least lack of antipathy or prejudice or bias is essential. This may be called negative sympathy. The negative sympathy is a strong impediment to appreciation of even the best of things. As an instance, I may mention how years ago the 'Gitanjali' of poet Tagore, which won the Nobel Prize, was hailed in one of the European dailies with the cartoon of an ape singing from the branch of a tree when, however both sympathy and antipathy are absent, there may still be professional or occupational envy or jealousy which is known to exist even among artists, musicians and a few other professions. This jealousy may generally and unconsciously be an impediment to appreciation. There is also another impediment which I may

name "Superiority Complex". Western people possess this superiority complex. Similarly, there is an element of this quality even among the protagonist of Hindustani and Carnatic music as against each other. This is, of course, erroneous and is generally and gradually disappearing. When, however, all the above impediments are eliminated by culture, studied, or affinity in any one of the forms mentioned above makes itself felt, real appreciation may be appropriate and conducive medium.

The medium through which appreciation may arise, grows through the via media of various sense organs like the ears, the eyes, the mind and the brain. This is how we come to appreciate and enjoy music, drama, painting, architecture, poetry, philosophy, lofty ideas and the beauties of nature. The appeal of music lies in aesthetic beauty and emotional expression through the co-ordination of the sense organs. □

(To be continued)

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BHARATANATYAM by 'Garland' N. Rajagopalan

Gitam, Vadyam, ca Nrtyam trayam Sangitam uccyate'

- Samgadeva

'Nrtyapriyo, Nrtyanarto, Nartakah Sarvavilasah'

- Lord Siva as Sri Nataraja

Uthamaadhama Madhyamam Naraanaam Karma Sangraham - 1
Hitopadesa Jananam Dhrtikrida Sukhaadikrit - 2

- Natya Sastra

[Natya teaches good things to all - the Uttama, the enlightened
Madhyama, the literate and Adhama, the illiterate]

'Naatyam bhinnarucheh janasya bahudaapi
Ekam samaara dhanam'

- Kalidasa in Malavikaagnimitra

[Dance alone provides multi-sided satisfaction to people of diverse tastes.]

Before commencing a recital, Bharatanatyam artistes invariably offer prayers invoking the blessings of the Supreme, simultaneously investing the occasion with solemn dignity and elevated grace. Musically visual aradhana has a positive spiritual and aesthetic impact on the audience in a far greater measure than singing the prayer alone. Even so, may I reproduce the following passage:

Bharatakula Bhagya Kalige!
Bhavarasananda Pannatakare!
Jagadeha Mohana Kale!
Jaya Jaya Rangati Devate Devi!

The Bharatanatyam artiste allegorically leads step by step the audience at the recital to the sanctum sanctorum of a temple enjoying pristine sanctity, grace and beauty adopting a phased programme stated to be in vogue from

the days of the eminent Tanjore Quartette

The immortal epics, the artifacts unearthed during Mohenjodaro excavations [III millennium B.C.E.], the incomparable Natya Sastra of Bharata [Ist millennium B.C.E.], the captivating Silappadikaram of Ilango in Tamil [IInd or VIth century C. E.] and the unexcelled sculptures in temples are positive proofs confirming the fact that Bharat took to, was wedded to and had excelled in perfecting the divine arts of music and dance from very ancient times. The contribution of South India to the great national cultural yajna has been colossal and impressive.

Dr. R. Nagaswamy writes: "The Amaravati panel of the Ist - 2nd century C.E. in Chennai Museum depicting four dancers deliberating on the distribution of the relics of Buddha is the best

portrayal of *group dance*. Another Amaravati panel now in British Museum depicts a *solo dance* with an all-women artiste *orchestra*. The earliest *jati* composed for dance by Vannaka Sattan probably in the 3rd century C.E. is inscribed in stone at Aranttanmalai near Erode. A sculpture on the wall of Dharmarajaratha, the great monolith, shows Siva teaching dance to Tandu Muni as per the tradition. A panel of the 10th century C.E. of Tiruchinnampoondi, now at Thanjavur Museum, depicting a dancer with supporting musicians is the best illustration. *Rajaraja Chola had made endowments for four hundred dancing girls and sixty-four supporting artistes with a duty to dance during the daily services [puja] to Sri Paramanandamurti [God in eternal joy] in the Thanjavur Great Temple*. One of the Mamallapuram inscriptions refer to Sage Bharata".

One comes across ill-clad lambadi [tribal] children dancing exquisitely at others' door-steps with native gaiety, naiveté and untaught charm just for a coin or a handful of rice. How delightfully their nimble limbs translate the formulations with rare abandon into elementary nrta? Who had ever taught them? It confirms inductively that dance is an age-old, inherent, inborn, native virtue of an Indian. Presumably the vital seeds and ingredients of the highly cultured and artistically developed dances of Bharata are traceable to folk dances. That dance is ancient finds corroborative reflection profusely in excavations, literature,

sculpture, painting, social customs and habits. Dance as an art born in the remote, glamorous past, inherited and nurtured with sophistication in the glittering present projects a grand vision of a verdant future.

"At one point in India's history, Bharatanatyam was probably performed throughout the country [perhaps not as perfected as now]. As Hindu society declined, performing arts associated with Hinduism were looked upon with disfavour by Muslim and British invaders. Many of them were pushed into pockets of protection in South India. Lyrical dance postures, however, survived in cave drawings and sculptures while living dance forms survived in temples and in a few families"

- AUFS 24

"If the flower were to represent civilization, its fragrance would be its culture. The uniqueness of dance in India lies in the expression of freedom within the framework of tradition and that freedom is for us to cherish".

- Sudharani Raghupathy

In Bharat, good and noble things are normally attributed to divine origin or sanction and dedicated to God. This gathers for them a remarkable aura and aroma worthy of the very sublime, investing them with sanctity in status and a holistic image. 'Mix love of God with food and arts. You shall reap the reward', has been the accepted mode. Fine arts, as gifts of God, refine man and clothe him with a cultured image. Devi Herself is hailed in Sri Lalita Sahasranama as

Nadarupini, Chatush Shashti Kalamayi - repository of sixty-four arts. Bhaskararaya includes the art of composition in different languages, Kavya alankara natakas, vocal and instrumental music and percussion among the sixty-four.

Bharatanatyam, some aver, is the name given during the thirties of the 20th century to what was earlier called *sadir*, *chinnamelam*, *sadir attam*, *dasi attam*, etc. It could have earlier been a comprehensive term to indicate dances of the country and later on, with emphasis and sophistication of regional variations, came to be slowly assigned to, and is now possessed by the comparatively technically advanced and perfected art in the South, even as India is India *sans* what is now Pakistan, etc. That a comprehensive term has come to be exclusively applied now to the art as practised in South India is at once a tribute to its excellence as well as its significant, accepted leadership among dances. Brahma is said to have handed over the *Natya Veda* to Bharata who in turn sought the help of Lord Siva for instructions. Siva instructed Tandu Muni [or Nandikeswara, as some aver] to teach Bharata the masculine aspect of dances and instructed Parvati to teach the feminine segment of dances. Parvati instructed Usha. Mythological background as given by different authors slightly varies. Patriot-poet, Subramanya Bharati paying a rich tribute to Brahma, the Creator, says,

"You have created many universes; but of all your creations, the most wonderful is music".

And music *ipso facto* shall cover dances. Lord Siva, hailed as Cosmic Dancer, is extolled by Muthuswami Dikshitar in *Raga Kedaram* as '*Ananda natana prakaasam*' who [*'Sangita vadya vinodha taandava jaata bahudara beta sodyam*'] even as He dances, accompanied by music and instruments, clarifies doubts, affirming His absolute supremacy and nonchalant artistic prowess! Epic hero Arjuna was himself the famed dance tutor [*nattuvana*], Bhannala. In his *Kumarasambhavam* [7-91], the foremost of Indian poets, Kalidasa [c. 200 BCE.] states:

*Thou sandhishu vyanjita vntti bhedam
Raasantereshu pratibaddha raagam
apashyathaam
Apsarasaam muhurtam prayogam
addham lalitangahaaram*

[Siva and Parvati witnessed the enchanting dance of apsaras for a brief while. Therein *sandhis* and *vnttis* were exhibited indenting on diverse appropriate ragas to accord with diverse emotions and sentiments]

Lord Siva performing *Taandavam* is passionately called by various names such as '*Nataraja*', '*Koothan*', '*Anandakoothan*', etc. as He is the source, inspiration and foremost performer of delightful dance, termed '*koothu*' in Tamil. Devi Parvati does the feminine parallel, the *Lasya*. The world of celestials reputedly is flooded with dances and dancers. The epics contain copious references.

Bharatanatya is expressive delineation or portrayal of the sum and substance, essence and fragrance, soul and spirit of the enlightened civilization and filtered efflorescence of the culture of Bharat reflected in a condensed form with *sangita*, *nritya* and *nritya*. It is fundamentally the overt visual demonstration, delineation, exposition and expressive communication of what is conceived in mind or perceived by heart, of the embedded urges and subtle emotions, and also of the irrepressible passion for identity and union with the Ultimate! The dancer takes a *pada*, *tillana*, *varnam* or *kriti* and weaves out infinite alternative, varying patterns to interpret and convey its meaning and message in all its possible glitter. *Natya* is the quintessence of the elasticity of lyric to bring out the expressive faculties and talents of a cultured artiste. The limit is only the *manodharmic* and interpretative artistic skill of the dancer and aesthetic limits. If the classical musician takes to *sangatis* and *sancharas*, the dancer takes to overt presentation through *adavur*, *abhinaya*, etc.

Amrtamanthana the first drama created by Brahma introduced charming phases of dance sequences. That Celestial Creator is thus seen to be a multi-dimensional trail-blazer. Dance phases were revealed to Bharata later. Another version is that during the churning of the ocean by Devas and Asuras, among the precious things that came out, the joy of

music and dance was one. Bharata pays obeisance to Brahma and Vishnu while popular opinion places the dance creation at the feet of Lord Siva. Gods requested Brahma to provide them with recreational modes and Brahma brought out *Natya Veda* - with words from *Rig Veda* (*Vaachika*); gestures from *Yajur Veda* (*Angika*); music from *Sama Veda* (*Sangita*) and sentiments from *Atharva Veda* (*Satvika*).

In all the versions, the credit goes to the same source only, in tune with the *sloka* 'Akaasaat patitam toyam etha gacchati sagaram'. [Rains that descend from heaven reach but the ocean ultimately] *Ekam sat*, *viprah bahuda vadanti* [Truth is one; the wise call it differently]. The term could also be traced to Sage Bharata Muni, author of *Natya Sastra*, or to the country itself to mean the exclusive art developed within its shores, or an anagram of *bhava*, *raga* and *tala*, the fundamental ingredients, the expressive amalgam of which constitutes the noble art.

Gestural communication should be as old as humanity, nay, any animate life. When the passionate eyes of the first lover lingered on the beloved, the first child beckoned its mother, the first calf stretched out its neck to the lady of the house, the first dog wagged its tail, the earliest seeds of unspoken message got exemplified. In spite of the perfected growth of languages, man is not able to dispense with, perhaps would never, his pre-historic inclinations and predilections

to resort to or indent on gestures while making love, in summoning someone, in asking for water and everything though language is happily available. Mime or gestures are not only economic substitutes for language spoken or sung but are more effective tools or instruments for instant communication! It could be said that *Bharatanatya* and *Abhinaya* are but refined, codified extension of enlightened, aesthetic cultured communication skills, to adopt modern phraseology in science and technology.

The artistic atmosphere since the

second quarter of the 20th century was so affluent that the eminent writer Kalki Krishnamurti succinctly described it thus

"Tamil Nadu has two wonders not found anywhere in the world - one, the indestructible rock - temples of Mamallapuram and the other, the great art of *Bharatanatya*"

"*Bharatanatya* is sculpture come alive with intricate *hastas*, *mudras* and other gestural nuances and is an art that captivates, conjures, enlightens and elevates [or in exceptional cases enslaves] man, woman, child and even the uninitiated"

Hearty Congratulations to Shri. TVS

The Music Academy, Chennai, conferred the prestigious title of "Sangita Kalanidhi" on Shri. T.V. Shankaranarayanan during the recently concluded Annual Music Festival

TVS as he is fondly known displayed an interest in music right from a tender age and confronted with choice, always opted for music. Nephew and disciple of Shri. Madurai Mani Iyer, he had by the age of ten, learnt about fifty *krithis* from his uncle, some of them, real heavy stuff belonging to the realm of art music. His maiden concert took place on 1st February, 1968 to the accompaniment of Shri. T.N. Krishnan, Shri. Vellore Ramabhadran and Shri. Alangudi Ramachandran



Audience appreciation apart, several honours, awards and titles have been bestowed on him in abundant measure. TVS is the recipient of the *Sangeet Natak Akademi Award* titles such as *Sangeetha Choodamani* and *Sangeetha Kala Sarathy*, and more recently, the *Padma Bhushan*. His penchant for Tamil music is well known and has earned him titles like *Sivan Isai Chelvar* and *Tamil Isai Vendar*

TVS while faithfully following his uncle's style, has been able to carve his own individual style which can best be described as vibrant, brimming with melody, coupled with expansive and lively *raga alapanas*, joyous and bouncing *swaraprastharas*, innovative RTP's and *viruttams* full of devotional fervour

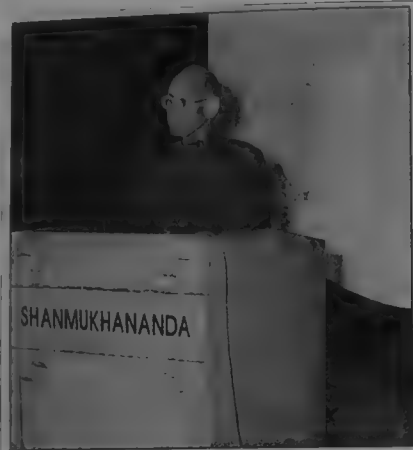
The Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha is immensely happy over the achievement of Shri. T.V. Shankaranarayanan and hasten to wish him many more laurels and many more years of active service to the cause of the Muse.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS AT THE SYMPOSIUM ON CHOREOGRAPHY AND DANCE by Hon. Dr. L. M. Singhvi*

Mr V. Shankar, President and Trustees, Friends and Admirers of the many splendoured contributions of the Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha, Distinguished Artists, Nrityacharyas and Choreographers, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I begin with a homage of remembrance to the founding fathers of the Sabha and the institution builders of this great institution which has created what is perhaps the largest auditorium of its kind, East of Suez. I would also like to pay my tribute on this occasion to Prof. T. V. Ramanujam, Shri. R. S. Mani and Dr. V. Subramanian in whose passing away recently I have lost a very dear and distinguished friend, whose contribution to the Sabha and the cause of Culture and Humanity deserve to be commemorated in my humble opinion, by a bronze bust or a portrait in these premises. We owe an everlasting debt of gratitude to each of the Trustees, Past and Present, who have nurtured this institution and with whose dedicated efforts the institution rose once again like a phoenix from the ashes.

I am here to make common cause with the Sabha on behalf of the entire art and culture community in the country



Dr L. M. Singhvi
delivering the Inaugural Address

and on behalf of all of you who are the grateful donees of the precious gift of this Auditorium to Mumbai, which is a singularly inspiring episode in the epic of post - Independence India. It is befitting to have this mega - Auditorium in Mumbai, the metropolis, which is by common consent the economic powerhouse and the financial capital of India, for though Delhi is the political capital of India. Mumbai is the metropolis where financial capital is.

A confluence of rivers is by hoary and sanctified tradition regarded as a holy pilgrimage in our country. The Triveni

Sangam in Prayag is one such pilgrimage. It appears as if the Triveni Sangam of Prayag has shifted to Mumbai in the Auditorium of the Sabha making it a true pilgrimage as a confluence of the Indian Fine Arts Circle which was merged into this Sabha in 1946, The South Indian Sangeetha Sabha which joined the mainstream in 1952. The Sabha and its auditorium today is a veritable Kala Sangam, a great confluence of Arts in India. I have come to you this morning to worship at the altar of the Arts and to perform a pilgrimage to this great centre with which you have happily associated the name of Lord Shanmukha and the name of my own mentor and source of inspiration, His Holiness the Paramacharya, Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati, whom I had the privilege to know as personified divine consciousness and who filled the life of the nation with everlasting grace, and the lives of many of us with the bounties of his blessings and benediction. At His Lotus Feet, I found how a great Devatatma inspires our sense of heritage and culture, how philosophy and spiritual quest permeates the Arts, how streams of divine consciousness flow through our cultural creativity, and how *Nada Brahma* and *Sabda Brahma* consecrate and weave, *Sat*, *Chit* and *Ananda* in the tapestry of our life on Planet Earth, and how the Trinity of The True, The Good, and The Beautiful (*Satyam*, *Sivam*, *Sundaram*) have come to represent the quintessential quest of Eternal India. As a homage to our Paramacharya and

adapting a line from our immortal poet Kalidasa, I said in a poetic ode that Paramacharya was like the Devatatma Himalaya, the divine yardstick of the earth (*Prithvyva Iva Manadandah*) though unlike the Himalayas our Paramacharya was located in the South. The original words of Kalidasa, as many of you may recall are

अन्यतरस्याम दिशि देवताम्ना
हिमालया मम नमोभिराज

I adapted these words and said

अग्रे दक्षिणस्याम दिशि देवताम्ना
श्री चन्द्रशेखरन्देव परमाचार्य
हिमालया मम नमोभिराज

Ordinarily I do not like to think in terms of North and South, for ours is one composite culture which does not countenance divisive compartments. There are multi dimensional diversities of languages and the arts in our country. Those diversities enrich our national life. I do not subscribe to the theories of Aryan - Dravidian divide. I firmly believe that there is need to understand and celebrate the South in the North and the North in the South, the East in the West and the West in the East. In that context, a tribute is due to the remarkable conservation of Eternal India's sense of the sacred in the South, in the ritual of worship, in the architecture and sculpture of temples, in different art forms and in the way of life itself. Fortunately, South India did not have to bear the brunt of invasion after invasion and the tragic desecration of temples, idols and art forms as in North India. South India on the other hand preserved the indigenous traditions a great deal more than North

* Hon. Dr. L. M. Singhvi, MP, is the President of Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts and a Trust Member of the Executive Board of UNLSCO. This lecture was delivered by him at the Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha, Mumbai for the "Symposium on Choreography and Dance" to mark the Golden Jubilee of the Sabha at the Sri Shanmukhananda Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Auditorium, Mumbai on November 8, 2003.

India was able to.

Shanmukhananda Sabha and this beautiful auditorium, built as it were, by Vishwakarma himself is a great sanctuary of the art traditions of India. I consider it a privilege and an honour to inaugurate the Dance Symposium to mark the Golden Jubilee and to bring you the prayerful invocation of the art and culture community of India. I give you my choicest good wishes on my own behalf and on behalf of innumerable institutions, Akademies and Centres including the IGNCa, a Trust of which I have the privilege of being the President.

I inaugurate the Symposium this morning with a golden jubilee prayer for Shanmukhananda Sabha and for this splendid Auditorium to Lord Shiva, Nataraja, the Lord of Cosmic Harmony and Rhythm for a glorious centenary celebration fifty years hence.

Many years ago, I had the great privilege as India's High Commissioner in the United Kingdom of bringing back to India the great idol of Nataraja which had been stolen and smuggled to the United Kingdom. Today as I inaugurate this important Golden Jubilee event, the image of that beautiful idol of Nataraja which was re-consecrated comes to mind his feet signifying the ultimate refuge and shelter to those who seek His Love and Grace. As Ananda Coomaraswamy puts it vividly "*In the night of Brahma, Nature is inert and cannot dance until Shiva wills it. Shiva rises from His rapture, and dancing, sends though inert matter, pulsating waves of awakening sound*"

There is a divine, celestial alchemy in that sound which we often experience in our Music and Dance because they have a spiritual anchor for the journey of humankind from the sensuous to the soulful, from the turbulent to the tranquil.

In the Indian tradition, *Natya* represents the combination of both dancing and acting, *Nritta* is pure dance and shows the intricacies of timing, rhythm, posture and footwork; finally *Nritya* comprises movements of the body, hands and limbs together with facial expressions and is filled with Rasa and thematic flavour of feeling, mood and sentiment.

The function of choreography is to conceptualise a performance in a holistic perspective and to produce a mood, emotion and a sentiment all of which create the ambience of *Rasas*.

Choreography as a semantic expression has no doubt travelled to us from the West, but the art of composition which it represents belongs to the functional range of *Nati* and *Sutradhar*. Choreography is a word of western vintage but the art and function of composition is what choreography is all about. It is not an exclusive western concept. Indeed, it has been a part of our tradition for trackless centuries and is integral to both performance and presentation of dance and drama. Choreography is meant to capture and enhance the essence of a performance, tying together technical virtuosity and aesthetic ambience, emotional experience. A choreographer or the *Sutradhar* or the *Natyacharya* is the

hyphen that joins and the buckle that binds.

In Greek and Latin, *Choragium* meant a Dancing Ground or a Place where a chorus was trained. It was exactly the same as ancient India's Ranga Shala. A chorus required team work, coordination and direction. It was from choruses that the traditions of choral and choir music were adopted by the church in the western society. The chorus tradition also goes back to the Vedic Age in India.

Years ago, I saw in Athens a large and beautiful amphitheatre where Greek tragedies, comedies and choruses were performed in ancient times. Almost the whole city used to assemble there to enjoy the plays and choral music and dance. The affluent citizen of Athens who defrayed the cost of the presentation was also called *Choragus*. In the Indian tradition, the Royalty or the leading merchants, the *Sreshthis* would perform the function of a *Choragus*. In that sense Lord Shanmukha is a pre-eminent *Choragus* as the patron of the arts. The leader or the principal presenter of the event was also called *Choragus* in Greece and was akin to the *Sutradhar* of the Indian *Natya-Nritya* tradition. Choreography is thus the art of putting it all together, in the right sequence and in the right proportions. Choreography is the thread which runs through the entire presentation. Composition or Choreography thus means essentially, positioning every component together in an integrated and proportionate setting to give the

performance a sense of coherence and direction.

In 1876, the word *Choreograph* and *Choreography*, derived from the Greek language were used in French for the written notation of dancing and music and the director of a ballet was referred to as a choreographer. *Choreography* in the West goes back to its Greek origin in the functions of a *Choragus*. In modern times, *Choragus* is the conductor of the orchestra and director of a play or a performance. In India, it must trace its roots to the functional role of *Sutradhar* and at the same time synthesize the aesthetics of western choreography with Indian themes and styles.

Indian art forms have always evolved through interaction and have also flourished in transplantation and transcreation. In the universe of Indian art, we look upon one and all with friendly eyes.

मित्रस्य चक्षुरा समक्षमाह

"*Mitrasya Chaksushe Samikshmahe*" says the Rig Veda. We welcome noble thoughts from all directions. The two ancient aphorisms "*Aaa No Bhadrak Kratavo Yantu Vishwatah*" and "*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*" define our approach to all art forms, remembering Mahatma Gandhi's sage counsel that we must keep our windows open for fresh breeze to blow in from all sides but we must never be swept off our feet. Tradition and Innovation are the breath of life for arts. For instance Dr. Ms. Padma Subrahmanyam is going to speak at this Symposium on Indian Dance for Non Indian Music and

Ms Jhelum Paranjpe on innovative choreography in Odissi. We have here in this Symposium, a fabulous feast for our aesthetic palate. Let us build on this Symposium and create avenues of versatility adaptation and redefinition both in the text and the context.

● A choreographer has to have the eyes and the ears of his age. He is a witness, an interpreter and an exponent. He must know his theme, he must have a rapport with his viewers and listeners and their linguistic and emotional range of responses. A choreographer has to provide a focus of projection for the theme, has to make sure that there are no loose ends; he or she has to be innovative and holistic in his or her approach. He or she must offer a visual feast and a feast for the musical ears of his audience.

Let me use the analogy of an essay: A composition or choreography is essentially like an essay which is knit together by the theme as well as the style, it is the orchestration by the performers, performance and the production which have a multitude of aspects which are conducive to good choreography. In the composition of performing arts, the audio-visual consonances and resonances are a key factor. *Natya Shastra* tells us to consider the following among other aspects in choreography:

1) The ideal playhouse, metrics, prosody, diction, types of characters, costumes, make up, intonation sequence, entrances and exits, the representation of sentiments, emotional

and other states, style in acting, movements of limbs, the setting and construction of a play, conventions of time and place and the canons of criticism and assessments, music both vocal and instrumental.

2) Acting and dance are the *Elan Vital* which enliven choreography which in turn bonds together performances and the audience and weaves in one mosaic acting, dance, music, décor on stage, ambience in the auditorium and the occasion itself.

Aristotle's drama also comprised six heads as did Bharata Muni's treatise on Dramaturgy. Aristotle's six heads of dance and drama were fable, manners, diction, sentiments, music and decoration. Bharata Muni similarly enumerated six heads which are as follows - decoration, postures, gestures, words, representation of temperaments and music. These six heads of Aristotle and Bharata Muni give symbolic meaning to the six faces of our presiding deity as the symbol of Lord Shanmukha, the Lord of Six Faces.

In India, the Trinity of *Natya*, *Nritta* and *Nritya* belong together. *Natya* and *Nritya* go beyond pure dance and its mathematical notations. Dance and Music are ultimately fulfilled by *Abhinaya* which is *Angic* (bodily gestures), *Vachik* (poetry, music and rhythm), *Aharanya* (costumes and makeup) and *Satvik* or manifestations of mental and emotional states.

Legend and myth of Indian antiquity tell us of the divine origin of Dance. It was at the request of the gods that the

Lord of Creation, Brahma gave to the world a fifth Veda, the *Natya Veda*. To create this fifth Veda, Brahma took recitation from the Rig Veda, song and music from the Sama Veda, histrionic representation from the Yajur Veda and sentiments and emotions from the Atharva Veda. The task of systematising the Fifth Veda was entrusted to Bharata Muni. In order to impart grace and charm to dances, Brahma created Apsaras or nymphs on the advice of Bharata Muni, thus was added *Hasya* to *Tandava*. *Lasya* is the tender feminine grace of Indian dance and *Tandava* is its vigour and energy.

The great sage and seer Bharata Muni has bequeathed to us a magnum opus of elaborate detail. Strange as it may seem, it was only in the latter half of the 19th century that the German scholar, Hall, came across a manuscript of *Natya Shastra*. Thereafter many other manuscripts of Bharata Muni's *Natya Shastra* were discovered. We owe our debt of gratitude to Heymann and Regnaud, Grosset and Levi for the erudition they brought to bear on their epoch-making study of *Natya Shastra*. It was as late as 1894 that Indian Pundits brought out the original Sanskrit text. Then we discovered the manuscript of Abhinava Gupta on *Natya Shastra*. The origin of Bharata Muni's *Natya Shastra* goes back to many millennia, but it retains its unique resonance and relevance even today. It is a tribute to the oral tradition and the resilience of Indian heritage that though the manuscript had gone into oblivion, the

message, the percepts and systems which are the legacy of Bharata Muni have survived through countless centuries and through myriads of trials and tribulations.

For the Sabha and for this Dance Symposium, I invoke Lord Shanmukha's blessing and remember with reverence the great saga and seer of *Natya Shastra* Bharata Muni and my spiritual mentor the great Paramacharya.

I am sure that this Symposium will be a treasury of ideas and scholarship and will prepare the ground for a critical apparatus on the goals and roles of choreography in Indian Dance today, tomorrow and day after. The Symposium ought to be the launch of a voyage of discovery. The Indira Gandhi Centre for the Arts Trust of which I have the honour to be the President will soon be holding an International Seminar on *Mudra* which is a cognate subject and to which I invite you to contribute. I conclude with my grateful appreciation to the Chairman and Trustees of Sri Shanmukhananda Sabha and all of you for having accorded me the honour of inaugurating this fabulous and fascinating festival of ideas, thoughts and convivial conversation among different schools and genes of Indian dances which are only the expressions of Indian creativity. To adopt a thought beautifully expressed by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Art and Literature is one though spoken, written and performed in different languages, schools and forms, I am confident that this Symposium will bring different dance forms together and closer, will facilitate

meaningful interaction among them and will enable and embolden Indian dance to explore the frontiers and to be a force to be reckoned with in the world of art for our traditions are rich, our creativity is boundless and our hopes and aspirations are high. We have a variety of dance forms in our country and each one of them is a valuable part of our tangible and intangible heritage. Some of them are in peril of extinction. It is our duty to save them, study them, document them, and digitize them. Many of them are well known and are flourishing, thanks to the pioneering initiative of pioneers like Rukmini Devi and many who followed her and many *Nrityacharyas* and *Nrityanganas*. State and Public patronage have to an extent filled the void created by the disappearance of royal courts. There are many so called folk forms which are endangered dance species like old manuscripts and they have to be preserved. The Govt. of India and the State Govt. have to join hands to create a National Foundation for our Cultural Heritage with the help of Institutions like the Shanmukhananda Sabha and IGNC.



Byron spoke of Dance as the Muse of the many twinkling feet whose charms extend from legs to arms and are manifest on the face. Dance is, in my opinion, Joy, and Joy is an elation of Spirit. Indeed, Dance is not merely the poetry of the limbs but a prayer, a spiritual quest of the meaning of Life Divine and of the essence of every *Rasa* says *Taithiriya Upanishad*

“रसो वै सः”

Brahman is *Rasa* through which we attain the bliss of experience. As Sage Bharata puts it

न भावहीनोऽस्ति न भावो रसवर्जितः
परस्परकृता सिद्धस्तयो रभिनये भवेत्

that is *Rasa* and *Bhava* are intertwined and together they are fulfilled in *Abhinaya Siddhi*. All the *Rasas* are the living streams of life flowing to join the ocean of cosmic spirituality and that is what every choreographer must remember.

The Dance Symposium which I am inaugurating today is only the initial *Alarippu* or blossoming of Rhythm and Resonance. Let this Convocation tell all, those who have dedicated their lives to Dance. □

DANCE SYMPOSIUM - "CHOREOGRAPHY - ART OF COMPOSING DANCES" A Report * - Part I by Smt. Indu Raman

What is a Symposium? It is a meeting of professionals for discussions on a particular theme of their specialty. What happens when a group of achievers in a chosen field come together and give an exposition of their accomplishments? What is the aim of such an exercise? As an observer and participant one has attended various such gatherings in the dance and music arena. There is a concerted attempt to address the theme of the Symposium. Allied issues are raised and sometimes valid or tangible conclusions are arrived at. The combined forces of artistic minds and creative personalities can offer guidelines and make a meaningful contribution of an academic nature. To ensure that this happens, the organizers should draw up a strict format to be followed by the artistes. Each such gathering should offer a tangible effect to unify our arts and spread awareness. The many problems that beset the arts must be solved. The doubts of younger artists must be clarified. New path-breaking efforts must be projected. The organizers are faced with the challenge of dealing with a temperamental bunch of artists with varying requirements. The logistics of herding them together from different parts of the country itself is an onerous task. And when one knows that

such a magnificent job has been executed by volunteers for the sheer joy and love of arts, it deserves a round of applause for the people behind the curtain.

The Symposium began with an unusual invocation to Lord Ganapati through dance. President V Shankar stated that the Sabha is continuing its journey of fifty years with renewed energy. He took justifiable pride in the fact that the Sabha had completed a hat-trick by holding three Symposia for three consecutive years. He pointed out that our classical dance has an ancient history, but carries with it marginal changes in the passage of Time. It would be appropriate therefore to pause and examine the traditional and the transformation at this moment.

The erudite speech of Shri L.M. Singhvi of the Indira Gandhi National Institute of Arts delved deep into the subject of Choreography. He paid homage to the founding father's of SSFA&SS, Prof. T.V.Ramanujam, Shri. R.S.Mani, and Dr. V.Subramanian who had passed away recently. He paid glowing tribute to the spirit of the Sabha which rose phoenix-like from the ashes after the fire mishap. The story of the Sabha, he proclaimed, is a singularly important epic in the history of arts in our

* Natyakala Vidwat Sadas organised by Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha held on 8th & 9th November, 2003 at the Sri Shanmukhananda Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Auditorium

country.

Shri Subbudu, the eminent critic, could not be present due to ill-health. His Keynote Address was read out by Dr. P.N. Krishnamoorthy, Principal of the Sabha's Music School.

In the Dance Symposium under review, the artistes were requested to speak and demonstrate on the Art of Composing Dances - Choreography. The top-ranking veterans like Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam, Smt. Kalanidhi Narayan, Dr. Smt. Kanak Rele, Shri. Sachin Shankar, Guru Adyar Lakshman, Guru T.K. Kalyanasundaram, Smt. Darshana Jhaveri and Dr. Sobha Naidu did not address the theme directly. Their exposition was a presentation of their work in the field and not entirely relevant to the Symposium.

It was difficult to pin them down and ask questions. The large student audience participated with great enthusiasm and when their questions were asked, the concerned artistes were not present.

The younger artistes like Anita Ratnam, Jhelum Paranjape, and Ambika Kameswaran addressed the choreographic theme, spoke of their ideas and how they used them in their work. Smt. Nalini Raghu and Smt. Asha Joglekar gave academically focused lectures and used their students to effectively demonstrate their ideas.

One of course wished that one entire slot could have been reserved for discussion when all the participants are present. Time is the essence and when one artiste does not respect the time

warning and eats into another's participant's time the organizers are hard put to even out the situation. The organizers of this dance symposium achieved this to a great extent and one must express our appreciation for the excellent teamwork and efficiency with which the event was conducted.

Excerpts of the presentations by the various participants at the Dance Symposium.

Dr. Smt. Kanak Rele



Dr. Smt. Kanak Rele

Dr. Smt. Kanak Rele is a distinguished scholar-educator and an exponent of Kathakali and Mohini Attam. As Director, Nalanda Dance Research Institute, Rele initiated research in dance and allied

subjects and is the Founder Principal of the Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya. Her extensive work with the scholarly poet Kavalam Narayana Panikker rejuvenated the repertoire of Mohini Attam and restored the Sopanam tradition of music.

In the paper submitted for the symposium, titled 'Theatrical Nuances In Kerala Performing Arts' Smt. Rele outlines the concepts such as *rasa*, *Natya Dharmi/Lokdharmi*, *Dhvani* and *Touryatrika* as given in *Natya Sastra*. She further describes theatrical nuances of *Kuttiyattam* and *Kathakali*, artistic devices of stylisation like *Manodharma*, *Pakarnattam*, make-up and the specialized technique of *Netra Abhinya*. In her demonstration, Smt. Kanak Rele was accompanied by vocalist Gireesan, Kathakali artist C. Gopalakrishnan on the Nattuvangam, Sri. Nambisan played the Edakka and Maddalam, while B. Ananthanarayan gave the melodic touch for Mohini Attam items on the violin.

Kanak Rele first performed *Nakaratundi Lalita* in Kathakali as taught to her by her Guru Karunakara Panikker, who was renowned for his interpretation of 'Panchali'. There is no such fury as a woman scorned goes a famous quote. Feelings of desire, anger and hurt flits across the mind of the woman who was spurned by her lover. The face is a mirror of artistry and Kanak Rele's expressive face registered every fleeting nuance of these emotions.

The oft-performed episode of *Puthana Moksham* was repeated on this occasion too, but Kanak Rele selected

an imaginative scene where the gopis are churning butter. The churning session becomes a gossip session and then, more interestingly, an ideal time to fix up a rendezvous with the lover. It was a treat to watch this veteran with her mobile face and large expressive eyes depict these situations with saucy humour. Smt. Rele paid a tribute to her mentor Prof. K. Srinivasan who gave her these ideas.

In Mohini Attam, Smt. Rele was on more familiar ground and excelled in 'A Mother's Lament' where she portrayed her anguish at her daughter's eloping. In 'Gandhari', Kanak Rele depicted the queen whose self-imposed blindness is interpreted not as just a blindfold but as shutting her eyes to evil. After the war, she goes to the battleground where all the evil souls lay dead. She could now open her blindfold and look at the bodies of her dead sons whose poisonous blood had stopped flowing for ever. The queen leads her blind husband away from the battlefield to the forests where they can spend the rest of their lives in repentance.

Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam

Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam's lecture demonstration was disappointing for the young students in the audience. There had been no paper submission, and the lecture on "Indian Dance for Non-Indian Music" was a walk down, an autobiographical memory lane where the main characters were family. 'Jatayu Moksha', her composition to Tchaikovsky's Overture in 'Romeo and



Shri S. Seshadri, Founder and Trustee, presenting a memento to Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam

Adyar Shri Lakshman

Adyar Shri Lakshman is the disciple of Rukmini Devi Arundale. He was one of the senior most students and trained in music, mridangam, and dance. He was honoured by the President with a Padma Shri in 1991. His institution Bharata Choodamani in Chennai has produced several dancers of high caliber.

His paper on the subject 'Nattuvangam and Dance Music' emphasised the important role played by the Nattuvangam artist in a dance performance. The *Peria Melam* is the Nadaswaram ensemble where the cymbals are played in a fixed rhythm (*sarvalaghu*) even while the raga is being played. *Chinna Melam* is the dance ensemble where the cymbals are played by the conductor (*Nattuvannar*) who is the main leader of the party.



Adyar Shri Lakshman

Juliet', was screened. A student was asked to demonstrate three of the karanas used in the composition. Dr. Padma sang Chinese, Azerbaijani and Russian songs beautifully and recounted the occasions where she had sung them. This was of course an unexpected bonus. The heavy expectancy and excitement before her appearance was palpable in the auditorium. The large number of students and art lovers present had awaited, Dr. Padma's appearance with bated breath. Here is one artiste whose tremendous contributions to choreography are milestones in our dance history. The highly receptive audience would have benefited immensely to hear Dr. Padma speak about her work and her approach to creativity. This would have raised the symposium to meaningful heights.

The *Nattuvannar* must be well-versed in vocal, mridangam, languages, the *Sastras*, and dance. The *Nattuvannar* plays a three-fold job of singing, recitation of the *Thirmanams*, and wielding the cymbals. There are not many artistes today who are versatile enough to do all three.

In his demonstration, the veteran dancer/singer/*Nattuvannar*/mridangist/Guru explained how to practice the recitation of syllables. Giving an example of the third speed in *Alarippu*, he explained that the silent Akshara is filled in with an extra suitable Akshara when reciting the second and third kalam. Sometimes, silent Aksharas in a *Thirmanam* enhance the recitation. He demonstrated a composition of his which used "TOM" as the main syllable. *Nandi Chol*, another famous and favourite composition of his, incorporated the word "NANDI". This was created as a tribute to the great Nandi, the bull who not only carried Siva on his back but also accompanied Him on the drum when He danced. Among his many innovations in dance, he cited the example of *Vasanta Jatiswaram* which was done in two speeds (*Kala*). As a teacher, he had experimented in teaching students who could not sing to recite the Swaras. This would give them a grip on Laya and Tala of the item they were learning. Any lapse in this area would be the teacher's fault, he pointed out.

A sense of proportion is required when one composes *Thirmanams* for *Varnams*. The present trend of lengthy *Thirmanams* during a *Varnam* distracts

the flow of the lyrics and should be avoided, he said. Regarding music, Sri. Lakshman pleaded for more experience and expertise in singers who sing for dance. He reminisced about the experience of a Balasaraswati performance where Tanjavur Gnanasundaram sang and Bala was inspired by him to improvise on his music. The musician needs his freedom to improvise and the dancer should respond with suitable movement or gestures.

Sri Lakshman demonstrated two important contributions he has made to the Art of *Nattuvangam*. One is the double beat used when there are two simultaneous steps. The *Nattuvangam* follows the footsteps of the dancer, and when these double-steps are performed the *Nattuvannar* used to play only one beat. The double stroke of the cymbal correctly reflects the sounds of the feet.

Another valuable idea was the invention of a special cymbal (*Thalam*) which eliminates the mishap of the cymbal beating a silent stroke because it hits the thread which juts out of its face. He has invented a flat faced *Thalam* which can be screwed on to the stem. The end of the thread handle is hidden inside the stem.

The lecture ended with his composition Sri Parthasarathy (Madhyamavati) performed by his disciple Anita Ratnam.

Smt. Nalini Raghu

Nalini Raghu, who underwent Gurukula training in Bharata Natyam



Smt. Nalini Raghu

under Smt. B. Lakshmikantam of Sri Pichaiya Pillai School in Thanjavur presented a well-thought out lecture and demonstration. Sri Pichaiyah was the son-in-law of the legendary Guru Meenakshisundaram Pillai. Smt. Raghu is associated with the Anushakti Lalit Kala Sanstha in Mumbai for over 25 years. Her students from this school demonstrated the items. She was accompanied by Smt. Saraswathi Subramaniam (vocal), Sankaranarayanan (mridangam), and B. Anantharaman (violin).

In her paper 'Cross Rhythmic Adavu Choreography' Smt. Raghu explains the use of a device which may be incorporated into dance composition to enhance the beauty of the *Nrta* sequences. 'When the rhythm of the footwork (*Adavu*) takes a different pattern from the rhythm of the *Swara* pattern of a *Jatiswaram* or of the rhythmic syllables of *Jati*, cross rhythms come into the picture.' This is best demonstrated in the *Tisra Alarippu* where the 'Tat Tai Ta Ha' in the third speed is performed in

Chatusshram. In the *Jatiswaram* (Kiravani) the *Thirmanam* was depicted in three ways. First the *Adavus* followed the *jati*. Then the *Adavus* went from 1,2,3, when the *jati* was 3,2,1 and vice versa. This kind of composition gives an interesting dimension to the *Nrta* composition. Another possibility is the *adavus* being set in the offbeat-(*Usi*) when the recitation is on the first beat (*Samam*).

The students of Lalit Kala Sanstha who demonstrated were impressive. They revealed clean and correct bodyline, *Angashudha*, and dedication to the Art and the Guru. The final *Thillana* composed by Nalini Raghu was an ode to atomic energy as *Shakti*.

What is the difference between a *Thirmanam* and *Makuta Jati*? Answering this question from the audience, Smt. Raghu explained that our arts had an oral tradition, and there would be differences in the nomenclature of many terms. Both *Thirmanam* and *Makuta Adavu* mean the same, i.e. the final 'Kita Thaka Dhari Kita Tom' *Adavu* used to end a sequence. *Thirmanam* is also a word used to denote the recitation syllables of a sequence like the *Trikala Thirmanam* in a *Varnam* or the shorter one in a *Jatiswaram*, she explained.

In Tamil the word *Thirmanam* means conclusion or determination. In dance the concluding sequence is repeated thrice.

Smt. Jhelum Paranjape

Jhelum Paranjape, disciple of Shri Kelucharan Mahapatra, the maestro of

the Odissi style, has been steadfastly been presenting a number of productions on contemporary topics. A performer with a busy schedule and a competent and dedicated teacher, Jhelum runs 'Smitalay', a dance institute named after a dear friend, actress Smita Patil. She has participated in theatre performances and directed dance sequences in TV serials and films.

Choreography for groups using the Odissi technique is a special passion for Jhelum, who won appreciation for ballets like *Maya Darpan*, *Leelavati*, and *Narmada*.

In the paper submitted by Jhelum Paranjape, "Innovative Choreography in Odissi", she has traced the history of Odissi, a style which won acceptance as a classical style after efforts by her Guru, Kelu Babu, Guru Mayadhar Raut, and D.N. Patnaik, a dance scholar. It was dancers like Priyambada Mohanty and Sonal Mansingh who popularized the art with their performances. The *Devadasis* (*Maharis*) originally danced only in the temples. Their *Abhinaya* was simple and did not use much footwork. This tradition was passed on to young boy dancers called *Gotipuas* who dressed as women and introduced jumps, acrobatic movements and jerky movements. Jhelum's students demonstrated these steps which included a full backward bend. Kelucharan Mahapatra was himself a *Gotipua* in his childhood. His wife came from a *Mahari* tradition. He felt the need to enhance the style without distorting its body kinetics. Jhelum demonstrated the original style and then



Smt. Jhelum Paranjape

the aesthetically refined style

Another major change was in the language. Many regional language compositions were added to the repertoire which till then had used only Odiya and Sanskrit. This he felt was one way of introducing the style in the interiors of the country.

'One should be careful about innovation,' says Jhelum, 'as there lies a thin line between exploration and exploitation.' In an attempt to depict mathematical problems by using "Leelavati" a treatise by 12th century mathematician Bhaskaracharya, Jhelum and her students depicted one problem about a snake and a peacock. Strictly adhering to the Odissi technique, but innovating in costume and music (Vivaldi's Four Season's), the production was an impressive milestone.

Sometimes the theme compels one to create new *Mudras*, *Charis* and *Sthanakas* or use them in variance with tradition. Jhelum Paranjape's lecture covered the theme of the Symposium with relevance. It revealed the doubts and obstacles that arise during dance composition at every stage-concept, music, language, movement and the degree of innovation that will be accepted.

Guru T. K. Kalyanasundaram



Guru Shri T. K. Kalyanasundaram being honoured by Shri S. Seshadri

The Sri Rajarajeswari Bharata Natya Kala Mandir was represented by Guru T. K. Kalyanasundaram. Several noted students and members of his own family performed excellently as dancers and as accompanists. Gurus Shri Vasant and Shri Vishwanath were ably supported by the young vocalist Vidya Balasubramanian. Shri Hari Krishna did

a double act as mridangist and dancer. The following time-honoured items from the vintage repertoire were presented:

1. Paalum Thulithenum - Ganapati Invocation
2. Kuvutvams - Ganapati, Kartikeya, Nataraja, and Rajarajeswari
3. Radha Krishna Leela
4. Andal dream sequence
5. Pandu Adithal - Vasantavalli
6. Solla Vandaye
7. Thillana

Guru Kalyanasundaram's son Hari Krishna danced a *nrtta* sequence to his father's recitation of an intricate *Thirmanam*. The performance concluded with a detailed history of the historic Tiruvaidaimarudur family and a display of the portraits of their ancestors. This session was performance oriented and though it spoke volumes about the

eternal beauty of traditional compositions, could have been supported with an informative lecture. This Symposium would have been the ideal platform to effectively project the value system embedded in our traditional approach to classical dance.

(To be continued) □

NATIONAL EMINENCE AWARD 2003 A REPORT



Pandit Bhimsen Joshi giving his concert after the Award Ceremony

The Second National Eminence Award ceremony was held at the Sri Shanmukhananda - Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Auditorium, Mumbai, on December 6, 2003. The Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha has instituted this Award and the other one, namely, *Shanmukha Sangeetha Shiromani*, in recognition of excellence in performing arts. The artistes honoured this year were:

Lifetime Achievement Award -
Pandit Bhimsen Joshi

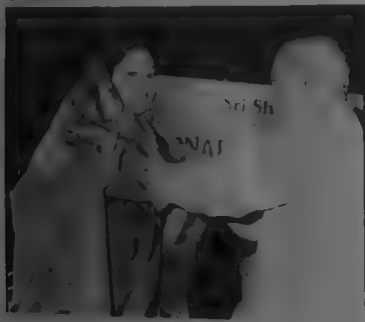
Shanmukha Sangeetha Shiromani Award -
Urmila Satyanarayanan (Bharatanatyam)
Nityashree Mahadevan (Carnatic Music)
Jayateerth Mevundi (Hindustani Music)

After Vedic chants by students of Subramania Samaj, Smt. Prema Krishnan rendered the invocation singing *Shanmukha Stuti* in *Hamsanandi*. Welcoming the artistes and the audience President V. Shankar of the Sabha traced the origin of the honours being conferred on eminent artistes. He paid glowing tributes to



Urmila Satyanarayanan strikes a pose during her dance performance

Pandit Bhimsen Joshi for rendering valuable services to classical music through his concerts over several decades and made an appeal for the conferment of the highest civilian honour namely, *Bharat Ratna*, on him. He pointed out two characteristics of the artiste, his loyalty to his Guru, Sawai Gandharva, in whose memory he conducts a music festival every year in Pune and the immense self-confidence he projects in his concerts. In a Marathi speech, Joshi thanked the organisers for the honour done to him. The Award to Joshi consisted of a purse for Rs. 1 lakh, a shawl, a citation and a Shanmukha icon. Similar were the contents of the *Shanmukha Sangeetha Shiromani Award* except for the amount being Rs 25 000.



Vice-President Shri Sadanand A. Shetty honouring Smt Nityashree Mahadevan with a shawl

Last year Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, the doyen of Carnatic music, was honoured. It is appropriate that this year the doyen of Hindustani music was the recipient of the *Lifetime Achievement Award*.



President Shri. V. Shankar presenting the citation to Pandit Bhimsen Joshi

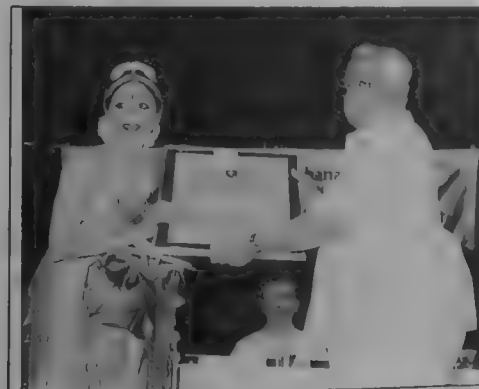
The other artistes have distinguished themselves in their respective fields at a young age. Nityashree donated the award amount to the Sabha for setting up an Endowment in the name of her illustrious grandmother D K Pattammal, the yield on which would be utilised for giving a prize to a budding artiste. A young girl Kum. B. N. Chinmayee was the proud recipient of the prize.

In keeping with the traditions well established by now the ceremony went off like clockwork. However, this reviewer felt that the citations were long containing clichés about music. Since enough was said about the artistes being honoured there was no need to repeat them in the citations. Ideally they should be short and read like a University Diploma. The Sabha authorities may like to take a look at the citation (*birudu*) of The Music Academy and of the Sangeet Natak Akademi.

After the ceremony, there was a half-hour concert by Joshi and a 45-minute dance by Urmila. Bhimsen Joshi, the doyen of the Kirana Gharana, sang a Khayal in Yaman Kalyan. After a short evocative alap he rendered the bandish set to teen taal. It is amazing that he has

preserved his voice, which has not lost any of its sheen despite his age and somewhat indifferent health. It was resonant and melodious. There was the slow note-by-note development (*badhat*) associated with the *Kirana Gharana*. The *taans* tumbled forth in abundant measure with breathtaking *murkis*. He finished his concert with a Jnaneshwar Abhang in praise of Vitthala of Pandharpur, which had notes of Bhimplas. It was rendered with emotion, which one associates with Bhimsen in devotional songs. The accompanying artistes on tabla, harmonium and cymbals extended support in an unobtrusive manner so that the rasikas could concentrate on Joshi's music. Vocal support by his disciples provided good fillers whenever he had to take a break in singing.

Urmila Satyanarayanan had to give her best in a short programme in view of the restrictions on the closing hour for entertainment stipulated by the police. But she made the most out of the limited time and got into her steps and stride



Urmila Satyanarayanan receiving the citation from the Vice President Shri Jayaram Mani

right from the beginning. After a *Pushpanjali* in Bahudari she danced to a song in praise of Lord Nataraja in Pharas. She made up for the absence



Kum. Chinmayee - the proud recipient of D. K. Pattammal Endowment Prize receiving the Prize from Smt Nityashree

of a *Varnam* by exploiting the scope for improvisation offered in this *Kriti*. Very intelligently she utilised the line on "Navarasambulanu" in the song for doing *sancharis* bringing out the *navarasas*

through quicksilver changes in facial expression. The next one was a *Viruttam*, which had Shanmukhapriya, Mohanam Kapi, Sahana and Neelamani, followed by a song in the last raga ("Enna Kavi Padinalum"). This Tamil song, the authorship of which is attributed variously to Adishesiah and Thooran, had been made popular by the late Madurai Somasundaram as a *tukkada* (light piece) in the post-pallavi section of his concerts. Its rendition in the Bharatanatyam format showed how a resourceful

artiste could exploit a simple song to bring out *rasanubhava* (emotional experience). The song is addressed to Lord Muruga and soaked in *Karuna rasa*. The *stayibhava* of *Soka* was well established from the beginning to the end. The poet complains that whatever may be the song he composes in praise of the Lord has no effect in moving His heart. There is no use appealing to His father (Siva), mother (Parvati), mama (Vishnu) and mami (Lakshmi) as they are all indifferent to his pleas. There is no King Bhoja or any other philanthropist to give him a purse in recognition of his talents. However, his only objective is to surrender himself to Lord Muruga. The portrayal of gods and goddesses was done using the standard devata hasta mudras which came through loud and clear. After the emotion-draining Neelamani song, she took up a somewhat light-hearted javali by Pattabhiramayya - "Nimatalemayenura" in Poorvi Kalyani. This song is about a sadharana or samanya nayika, a harlot, who accuses her client of not keeping his promises to decorate her with ornaments for her ears, nose and feet. She really means business and says enough is enough and asks him to get out of her house. The whole piece was done sensitively and the finale was accompanied by a thunderous applause from the audience when she closed the door, latched it and walked away stylishly! The last item was a tillana of Papanasam Sivan in Behag. Attractive *addami* and *alaga utplavana* were the outstanding aspects of this item. Both *araimandi* and *muzhumandi* were executed artistically. The orchestral



President Shri V. Shankar presenting a memento to Shri Jayateerth Mevundi

support was of high professional standard. The clear enunciation of the sahityas by the singer, Suresh, made it possible to understand their meanings.

As a student of Dandayuthapani Pillai, K J Sarasa and Kalanidhi Narayanan, Urmila has absorbed the best in the various schools of dancing she has trained in. There was *angasuddha* in her *adavus* and the *hasta mudras* were an object-lesson for the young dancers in the audience. *Aharya* was graceful. She wore a sari in light orange, which blended well with her performance without distracting attention. The only point by way of criticism is that the songs were all in Adi tala. Considering her mastery of laya, a piece in Misra Chapu or some other tala would have provided a variety in rhythm. The movements were free flowing and the line and form were crisp and clear. It is no surprise that Urmila is among the front-ranking Bharatanatyam dancers.

- Natya Sastri □

THIRD MAHASWAMI SANGEETANJALI A REPORT

The third in the series of Mahaswami Sangeetanjali, an annual homage to the late Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati of Kanchi Math, was held in the Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha on December 7, 2003. The programme commenced with chants by a group of Vedic pandits. After V. Shankar, President of the Sabha, explained the background to the Sangeetanjali there was a rendering of "Sri Kanchimuni Pancharatna Haram" by Kalyani Sharma and her group. The five lyrics, patterned after the Pancharatna kritis of Tyagaraja and in the same ragas of Nattai, Gowlai, Arabhi, Varali and Sri, were the compositions of Smt. Lakshmi Raghavan, specially prepared as a

tribute to the Mahaswami. They were true to the format of the Pancharatnas of Tyagaraja including the use or non-use of musical phrases. Thus, to give one example, the prayoga of Pa Dha Ni Pa in Sri Raga was avoided. According to some experts this phrase provides *ranjakatwa* to the raga but it should be used only once. The Navaragamalika Varnam and the Dikshitar kriti "Sri Kamalambike" are good examples, particularly the latter in the beautiful

manner in which it is incorporated. However, Tyagaraja eschewed it in his Sri Raga Pancharatna and in kritis like "Nama Kusumamulache" but still bringing out the contours and contents of the raga in full measure - a mark of his musical genius. There were nine singers, two violins, two veenas, one mridangam and one ghatam in the group. There was perfect coordination among the artistes. It was a great musical experience for the audience. This reviewer did not see any notes before the artistes for taking furtive downward glances at them to refresh memory while singing! Kudos to Kalyani Sharma and her group for a job well done!



Smt. Kalyani Sharma and her group rendering the "Sri Kanchimuni Pancharatna Haram"

The final programme of the day was particularly the latter in the beautiful a solo concert by T. N. Krishnan, one of



The Violin concert by T. N. Krishnan in progress

the violin trinity, the other two being Laigudi G. Jayaraman and M.S. Gopalakrishnan. He was accompanied by two eminent percussionists - Vellore G. Ramabhadran on the mridangam and N. Govindarajan on the ghatam. The concert was conceived as a tribute to Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Krishnan's Guru, who had recently passed away, as well as to the late Sankaracharya. This was evident from the selection of kritis, which were the favourites of the late maestro. They were: Deva Deva (Mayamalavagowlai), Dinamani (Harikambodhi), Kaa Vaa Vaa (Varali), Padavini (Salagabhairavi) and Ragam, Tanam and Pallavi in Shanmukhapriya with a ragamalikai in Tanam (Behag, Sahana, Bhairavi and Mohanam). The Pallavi "Saravanabhava Guhane" was in Adi tala and had a short sawal-jawab interlude with the percussionists. A Dharmapuri Subbarayar javali -

Emphasis on the jeeva swaras and appropriate use of gamakas are Krishnan's forte. Keeping in view the solemnity and spirit of the occasion, he had a restrained resort to swaraprastaras. The use of modulation and sphurita gamaka were notable features of RTP. Krishnan's approach to music is simple but, at the same time, highly aesthetic so that even a layman can appreciate it. As in the case of his guru, his rhythm is straightforward with no complicated kanakku (mathematical calculations). It went well with the accompaniment by the master of sarvalaghu, Vellore Ramabhadran. The percussionists provided a good rhythmic support. Mercifully the volume of sound was at a comfortable level. Contrary to current trends the artistes did not ask for raising it. □

- A. Seshan

"Marubari" in Khamas - and "Chandrasekara", a Papanasam Sivan composition in Sindhu Bhairavi, rounded off the concert. The last song, popularised by Alathur Brothers in a 78-rpm record more than half a century ago, was heard after a long time. It was appropriate for the occasion in lieu of a song on the Paramacharya.

OBITUARY**Sangeetha Kalaratna Shri. Venkataram passes away**

Eminent Ghatam Vidwan Bangalore Shri. K. Venkataram passed away due to a massive heart attack at Tirunelveli on 18th October, 2003. The end came after the Radio Sangeet Sammelan Concert in which he had provided Ghatam accompaniment for a Carnatic recital of Hyderabad Brothers. Incidentally two other Ghatam Vidwans passed away on the concert platform - Alangudi Ramachandran and Palghat Sundaram. Shri. Venkataram leaves behind his wife, son and daughter.

An engineer by profession, Shri. Venkataram performed and maintained his busy musical schedules side by side with his engineering career. Son of Shri. S. Krishnaswamy Ayyar, he was born in 1934. He was a disciple of Shri. K.S. Manjunathan and was a prominent Ghatam and Mridangam Vidwan. He was actively involved with many cultural organisations that promoted young talents and the welfare of artists.

An able organiser with a good vision, he took an active role in the promotion of Carnatic Music in Bangalore. He launched his own Percussive Arts Centre, in 1981 (earlier called the Palghat Mani Iyer Memorial Arts Centre), an association which has carved a niche for itself and has done yeoman service to musicians and percussionists. Shri. Venkataram instituted the Palghat Mani Iyer, the Palani Subramania Pillai and Puttacher Awards, strived tirelessly and finally succeeded in getting grants for his organisation. He was very particular about quality and objectivity which was reflected in the presentations by the participants in the Talavadya Utsav Conferences which was conducted every year by the Institution.



Recipient of many awards, Shri. Venkataram was not only an eminent musician, having enriched his repertoire considerably since his debut in 1946, accompanying Shri. T. Chowdiah, the famed violin maestro. In the association of Anoor S. Ramakrishna, he came out as a fine vocalist too. His knowledge of Shastras pertaining to music in general and Talavadyas in particular was profound. He had served in the National Talent Research Scholarship Scheme, Talavadya Examination of the Karnataka Education Board etc. He has given a number of concerts and recordings and had provided mridangam support in the unique 'Avadhana Pallavi' rendition by Pallavi Chandra, filmed for the Archives of National Academy for Dance, Drama and Music, New Delhi.

Some of the titles conferred on Shri. Venkataram are :

Laya Gnana Visharada	1971;	Sangeetha Kalaratna
Laya Gnana Praveena	1976;	Rajyotsava Award
Sangita Vidyandhi	1980;	Swaralaya Srunga (Awarded posthumously)
Tala Vadya Kala Tilaka	1980;	Lalitha Kalashraya (Awarded posthumously)

With the passing away of Bangalore Shri Venkataram, the music world has lost not just a good percussionist, organiser, but a true lover of music whose life was devoted totally to music, a true Karmayogi. The void left by such a dedicated, sincere, efficient, largehearted person will not be easily filled, but his legacy will endure. □

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VOCAL / CARNATIC :			
1.	Sri Suryasekhara Iyer Memorial (Instituted by Shri. P.S. Sitharaman)	Ms. Saipriya	Shri. P.G. Viswanathan
2.	Indian Bank Endowment (Instituted by Indian Bank)	Ms. Saipriya	Shri. P.G. Viswanathan
3.	Sri Muthukrishna Yathindra Memorial (Instituted by Shri Seerkazhi Sundaresan)	Kum. Smrithi S.	Shri. P.G. Viswanathan
4.	Indian Bank Endowment	Kum. Smrithi S.	Shri. P.G. Viswanathan
5.	Shri. M.V. Shankar Memorial (Instituted by Shri. N.V. Brinji)	Kum. Deepta R.	Smt. Prema Krishnan
6.	Indian Bank Endowment	Kum. Deepta R.	Smt. Prema Krishnan
7.	Shri. Jayaram Mani Endowment (Instituted by Shri. Jayaram Mani)	Master Prashant V.	Smt. Radha Santhanam
8.	Indian Bank Endowment	Master Prashant V.	Smt. Radha Santhanam
9.	Smt. Kalyani Sharma Endowment (Instituted by Smt. Kalyani Sharma)	Master Suraj S.	Smt. Radha Santhanam
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13.	Trichy Swaminatha Bhagavathar Endowment (Instituted by Trichy Shri Swaminatha Bhagavathar)	Shri Padmanabha S.	Smt. Prema Krishnan
14.	Kambangudi Kamalambal Venkatarama Memorial (Instituted by Shri. V. Athmanatha Iyer)	Shri Padmanabha S.	Smt. Prema Krishnan

S.No.	Title of Endowment / Memorial	Name of the Awardee	Name of the Teacher
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15.	Dena Bank Krishnaswamy Memorial (Instituted by Shri. K. Ramaswamy)	Kum. Ramya Rajan	Smt. Radha Santhanam
16.	Indian Bank Endowment	Kum. Renuka R.	Smt. Radha Santhanam
17.	Indian Bank Endowment	Kum. Abarna Balan	Smt. Radha Santhanam
18.	Indian Bank Endowment	Shri Jayamohan Pillai	Smt. Radha Santhanam
19.	Indian Bank Endowment	Kum. Prabha S.	Smt. Radha Santhanam
20.	Indian Bank Endowment	Master Vivek Nair	Smt. Radha Santhanam
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21.	Shri. Digmaruti Sivrama Prasad (Instituted by T. Suchitra Devi)	Kum. Padma S.	Shri. Suresh Degwekar
22.	Indian Bank Endowment	Kum. Jaspreet Kaur Tandon	Shri. Suresh Degwekar
VEENA :			
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46.	Indian Bank Endowment	Master Aditya M.	Shri. T.S. Nandakumar

S.No.	Title of Endowment / Memorial	Name of the Awardee	Name of the Teacher
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